

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 07971 01 OF 03 180913Z
ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00
DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 OES-06 CEQ-01 EPA-01
H-01 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
/072 W

-----180916Z 104550 /15

R 180857Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0752
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
FAA BRUSSELS
AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 07971

E.O. 11652 N/A
TAGS: EAIR, FR, UK, US
SUBJECT: CIVAIR: CONCORDE

1.SUMMARY: COMMITTEE GROUPING REPS OF
COMMUNITIES AROUND CDG AIRPORT HAS WRITTEN PORT
AUTHORITY URGING CONCORDE BE BANNED AT
NEW YORK. IN OUR COMMENT WE NOTE THAT AS ABOVE
LETTER ILLUSTRATES NOT ALL FRENCHMEN SUPPORT CONCORDE,
DESPITE IMPRESSION ONE MIGHT HAVE GAINED FROM RECENT
DISPLAY OF POPULAR FRENZY OVER CONCORDE IN THIS
COUNTRY WHILE AWAITING PORT AUTHORITY DECISION.
ANTI-CONCORDE FACTION IS VERY SMALL AND HAS
NOT BEEN VERY OUTSPOKEN. A DOUBLE STANDARD
EXISTS UNDER WHICH BY HYPOCRISY OR OVERSIGHT
AN EXCEPTION IS MADE FOR CONCORDE, EVEN TODAY WHEN
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PAGE 02 PARIS 07971 01 OF 03 180913Z

THE NEED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IS RECEIVING
INCREASING ATTENTION IN FRANCE. BUT DESPITE
ISOLATED INSTANCES OF OPPOSITION CONCORDE CONTINUES
TO ENJOY MASSIVE POPULAR SUPPORT IN FRANCE AND RE-
MAINS AN ISSUE THAT RISKS DOING MUCH HARM TO
FRANCO-AMERICAN RELATIONS IF THE NEW YORK DECISION
IS FINALLY NEGATIVE. END SUMMARY.

2. AFP REPORTS MARCH 16 THAT COMMITTEE GROUPING REPS OF COMMUNITIES LOCATED AROUND CHARLES DE GAULLE (CDG) AIRPORT HAVE SENT LETTER TO NEW YORK PORT AUTHORITY URGING THAT IT SET AN EXAMPLE BY BANNING CONCORDE, "THE NOISIEST AIRCRAFT IN THE WORLD." IN ITS LETTER COMMITTEE IS SAID TO WARN THAT NOTWITHSTANDING CLAIMS TO THE CONTRARY FROM AIR FRANCE AND BRITISH AIRWAYS TWO CONCORDE FLIGHTS DAILY TO JFK BY EACH CARRIER WILL CAUSE CONSIDERABLE INCREASE IN NOISE IN NEW YORK AREA, SINCE PERSONS LIVING IN A RADIUS OF TWENTY-FIVE KILOMETERS FROM CDG ARE ALREADY "PAINFULLY AWARE" OF CONCORDE WITH ONLY FIVE FLIGHTS A WEEK FROM CDG. LETTER THEN ADDS "AT A TIME WHEN ALL AIRCRAFT CONSTRUCTORS ARE SEEKING WAYS OF REDUCING NOISE FROM JET ENGINES, BE THE FIRST TO SET AN EXAMPLE BY REFUSING PERMISSION FOR THE NOISIEST AIRCRAFT IN THE WORLD TO LAND AT YOUR AIRPORT. YOU SHOULD TAKE YOUR DECISION NOT IN TERMS OF THE EFFECT THIS WILL HAVE ON EMPLOYMENT IN GREAT BRITAIN AND FRANCE, BUT ONLY IN TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE VERY SERIOUS NOISE CAUSED BY THE SUPERSONIC."

3. BY CHANCE (OR WAS IT?), ON SAME DAY-- MARCH 16--INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE FEATURED ON ITS FRONT PAGE TWO-PART ARTICLE DESCRIBING SURVEYS OF PERSONS LIVING IN VICINITY HEATHROW LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 PARIS 07971 01 OF 03 180913Z

AND DULLES AIRPORTS, WITH CONSENSUS BEING THAT CONCORDE NOISE ISN'T REALLY ALL THAT BAD AND ONE QUICKLY BECOMES ACCUSTOMED TO IT.

4. THE COMMITTEE IN QUESTION--LE COMITE DES RIVERAINS DE L'AEROPORT DE ROISSY-- WAS FOUNDED IN 1969 AND, ACCORDING AFP, ITS MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES SEVERAL THOUSAND PERSONS LIVING WITHIN 25 KILOMETER RADIUS OF CDG. COMMITTEE IS ESSENTIALLY APOLITICAL. IT HAS A LAWSUIT PENDING AGAINST AIR FRANCE FOR POLLUTION AND NOISE DAMAGE THAT HAVE ALLEGEDLY LOWERED PROPERTY VALUES.

5. ABOVE POSITION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE REPRESENTING COMMUNITIES IN VICINITY OF CDG IS INTERESTING SINCE IT POINTS UP FACT THAT IS OFTEN OVERLOOKED, NAMELY, THAT NOT ALL FRENCHMEN STAND FIRMLY UNITED IN SUPPORT OF CONCORDE. HOWEVER, ANTI-CONCORDE FACTION IS A VERY SMALL MINORITY AND FEW THUS FAR HAVE

DARED SPEAK OUT OPENLY. (EVEN SO OUTSPOKEN A
CRITIC IN THE PAST AS JEAN JAQUES SERVAN-SCHREIBER
WOULD APPEAR TO HAVE FOUND IT POLITIC THESE DAYS

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PAGE 01 PARIS 07971 02 OF 03 180902Z
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R 180857Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 02 OF 03 PARIS 07971

NOT TO REVIVE HIS OLD ANTI-CONCORDE CAMPAIGN.)
IN THE CONCORDE MAIL WE RECEIVE FROM THE GENERAL
PUBLIC, HOWEVER, THERE IS AN OCCASIONAL LETTER
CONDEMNING CONCORDE ON ENVIRONMENTAL GROUNDS OR
AS A WASTEFUL PROJECT THAT SHOULD BE ABANDONED.
DURING RECENT VISIT AIR ATTACHE MADE TO TOULOUSE
FRENCH MILITARY THERE WERE INTERESTED IN
TALKING ABOUT LITTLE ELSE BESIDES CONCORDE
(FURTHER EVIDENCE, IF IT WERE NEEDED, OF HOW
"NATIONAL" THE ISSUE HAS BECOME IN FRANCE), AND
A GREAT MANY CONCEDED THAT CONCORDE DID MAKE AN
AWFUL RACKET WHENEVER IT HAD OPERATED FROM
TOULOUSE'S AIRPORT. THIS CONTRASTS, OF COURSE,
WITH FAVORITE ARGUMENT OF TOULOUSE-BASED COMMITTEE

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PAGE 02 PARIS 07971 02 OF 03 180902Z

FOR DEFENSE OF CONCORDE CLAIMING THAT CONCORDE NOISE "NEVER" BOTHERED TOULOUSE INHABITANTS AND SO IT SHOULD NOT BOTHER NEW YORKERS. OBVIOUSLY THERE IS A DOUBLE STANDARD.

6. THIS DOUBLE STANDARD IS HEWED TO IN FRANCE WITH HYPOCRISY THAT IS OFTEN BLATANT. COMMUNITIES AROUND LE BOURGET AND ORLY AIRPORTS FORMED COMMITTEES MANY YEARS AGO TO PROTEST AIRPORT NOISE AND THEY HAVE BEEN FAIRLY EFFECTIVE. PROTESTS FROM LE BOURGET COMMUNITIES (AND, ADMITTEDLY, PROBLEMS OF EXPANDING THAT AIRPORT) CONTRIBUTED IN PART TO DECISIONS LEADING TO DEVELOPMENT OF CDG AIRPORT AND TO CLOSING OF LE BOURGET AS OF MARCH 31, 1977, TO COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC, WITH EXCEPTION OF A FEW SMALL FRENCH REGIONAL AIRLINES AND GENERAL AVIATION. DEPT. WILL RECALL LAWSUIT FILED BY ORLY COMMITTEE A FEW YEARS AGO IN WHICH AIR FRANCE, PANAM AND TWA WERE FOUND LIABLE FOR NOISE DAMAGE CLAIMS; CASE IS STILL PENDING ON APPEAL. YET THE COMMUNIST MAYOR OF TOWNSHIP BORDERING ORLY AIRFIELD AND WHO IS ONE OF MORE VOCAL LEADERS OF ORLY NOISE COMMITTEE WROTE US SOME TIME AGO MAKING EXCEPTION FOR CONCORDE AND URGING IT BE GRANTED LANDING RIGHTS IN US. HE, OF COURSE, COULDN'T CARE LESS SINCE CONCORDE DOES NOT LAND AT ORLY AND WE UNDERSTAND, MOREOVER, THAT SEVERAL YEARS AGO GOF GAVE ASSURANCES TO COMMUNITIES AROUND ORLY THAT CONCORDE WOULD NOT BE PERMITTED TO SERVE THAT AIRPORT.

7. LE FIGARO OF MARCH 17 OFFERS A TIMELY EXAMPLE OF THE DOUBLE STANDARD. THE STORY REPORTING THE LETTER SENT BY THE CDG COMMITTEE (PARA 1 ABOVE) IS RELEGATED TO ONE OF THE BACK PAGES OF THE PAPER. PAGE 5, HOWEVER, GIVES PROMINENCE TO A BOXSCORE
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PAGE 03 PARIS 07971 02 OF 03 180902Z

LISTING GAINS IN "THE FIGHT AGAINST POLLUTION" AS COMMUNICATED TO THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS THE PREVIOUS DAY BY THE MINISTER FOR QUALITY OF LIFE, WHICH CITES, INTER ALIA, ACTION TAKEN TO REDUCE NOISE FROM AUTOMOBILES AND CONSTRUCTION MACHINES AND ANNOUNCES IMPLEMENTATION OF A NEW

OVERALL GOVERNMENTAL PROGRAM TO FURTHER REDUCE
NOISE LEVELS. NOTHING IS SAID ABOUT AIRCRAFT NOISE.
NO PARALLEL IS MADE WITH CONCORDE.

8. FURTHER EXAMPLES: AFTER A LENGTHY DISCUSSION
OF CONCORDE WITH THE STAFF OF A LEADING PROVINCIAL
NEWSPAPER, CAA WAS TOLD PRIVATELY BY THE PAPER'S
AERONAUTICAL EDITOR, WHO HAS CHURNED OUT COUNTLESS
PRO-CONCORDE ARTICLES, THAT HE LIVED IN ROISSY
AT THE END OF CDG RUNWAY AND HE PITIED THE PEOPLE
OF NEW YORK IF CONCORDE WAS AUTHORIZED TO LAND THERE.
THE NOISE, HE SAID, WAS DEAFENING. AMERICAN
BUSINESSMAN, INTERVIEWED BY FRENCH TV ON CONCORDE
A FEW WEEKS AGO, TELLS US THAT INTERVIEWER LATER
APOLOGIZED TO HIM FOR HAVING BEEN OBLIGED TO
ASK "SILLY" QUESTIONS ABOUT AN AIRCRAFT IN WHICH
HE JUST DID NOT BELIEVE.

9. FROM TIME TO TIME IN THE PAST THERE HAVE
BEEN FAINT BLEATS OF PROTEST OR CRITICAL COMMENT
HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITIES AROUND CDG--WE RECALL
A TV INTERVIEW NEARLY A YEAR AGO, FOR EXAMPLE--
BUT WHAT HAS BEEN ESPECIALLY GALLING IS THE ABSENCE
OF ANY SERIOUS INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING BY

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PAGE 01 PARIS 07971 03 OF 03 180906Z
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 03 OF 03 PARIS 07971

FRENCH MEDIA TO DOCUMENT ANTI-CONCORDE SENTIMENT ON THEIR OWN DOORSTEP OR TO GO OUT TO CDG AND JUDGE CONCORDE NOISE FOR THEMSELVES. PERHAPS THE CDG COMMUNITIES' LETTER, AND THE INTERNATIONAL HEARLAD TRIBUNE ARTICLE, MAY PROMPT SOME FRENCH NEWSPAPER TO DO SOME OBJECTIVE INVESTIGATING AND REPORTING OF ITS OWN ON CONCORDE, ESPECIALLY SINCE IT IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO DISMISS ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS IN FRANCE WITH THE "ECOLOGY VOTE" HAVING SUDDENLY COME INTO SUCH PROMINENCE DURING THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS. BUT, THIS MAY BE TOO MUCH TO HOPE FROM THE FRENCH PRESS. FRENCHMEN CAN BE FOR SIN, BUT VERY FEW ARE READY TO STAND UP THESE DAYS AND

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PAGE 02 PARIS 07971 03 OF 03 180906Z

BE AGAINST MOTHERHOOD...OR CONCORDE.

10. COMMENT: EMBASSY HAS PROVIDED ABOVE SUPPLEMENTARY FACTS AND COMMENTARY IN INTERESTS OF OBJECTIVE REPORTING. THIS SHOULD NOT MISLEAD READERS, HOWEVER, INTO THINKING THAT CONCORDE IS ANY LESS SENSITIVE AN ISSUE THAT ENJOYS AND WILL CONTINUE TO ENJOY MASSIVE POPULAR SUPPORT ON THE FRENCH SCENE, WITH CONSEQUENT RISK OF MUCH HARM TO FRANCO-AMERICAN RELATIONS IF THE DECISION AT NEW YORK GOES AGAINST CONCORDE.
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TAGS: EAIR, FR, UK, US
To: STATE
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